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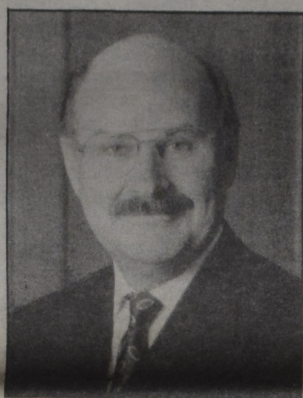
B.C. voters look to moderate version of Klein and Harris at next election

James Kwantes

VANCOUVER — The New Democratic Party will either come in second behind the Liberals at the next provincial election in B.C. or third behind the Reform Party, says Bob Burkinshaw. Burkinshaw is a history professor at Trinity Western University and a member of New Life Christian Reformed Church, Abbotsford.

"The disillusionment among former NDP supporters is pretty great, because it presented itself as the party with the greater moral integrity," he says. "That image has been badly shattered, even among their own people."

Burkinshaw said this in the aftermath of B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt's resignation last



B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt

month. Unlike the resignation of former B.C. premier Bill VanderZalm, who was forced to step down in 1991 in the wake

of conflict of interest charges, Harcourt's resignation came as a surprise to many people.

Harcourt's personal popularity had been plunging for weeks, however, largely as a result of his handling of the Nanaimo bingo scandal. While Harcourt was not personally implicated in the scandal, he refused to take action against party members who were and came under increasing criticism from the public and the media.

Burkinshaw recently wrote a book entitled *Pilgrims in Lotus Land: Conservative Protestantism in British Columbia*. He says that evangelical Christians, most of whom have historically supported Social Credit, will probably divide their loyalty be-

tween the Liberals and the provincial Reform Party in the next election.

"Lots will go to Reform as sort of a populist movement, which evangelicals have often liked," he says. But Burkinshaw notes that the Liberal Party has also made overtures to the Christian community, particu-

larly in "Bible Belt" areas like the Fraser Valley.

He says a Liberal government led by Gordon Campbell would probably be a more moderate version of the Ralph Klein government in Alberta and the Mike Harris government in Ontario.

See B.C. page 2...

Relief workers, world leaders protest Nigeria's execution of activists

Alan Doerksen (with files from *Newsweek* and the *Manchester Guardian*)

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — The military dictatorship of Nigeria has been condemned by governments around the world for its recent execution of nine anti-government protestors, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa.

In the wake of the executions, Christian organizations working in Nigeria, such as the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) and Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM), have been looking for solutions.

Power politics

World leaders have been quick to condemn the executions. South African president Nelson Mandela has been especially outspoken, and has warned Nigeria's dictator, General Sani Abacha, that he is "sitting on a volcano and I am going to explode it under him...."

In my view we should use the strongest method to show our disgust and resentment at what he has done. We are dealing with an illegitimate, barbaric, arrogant military dictatorship which has murdered activists, using a kangaroo court and false evidence."

Recently, Peter Vander Meulen, who is justice co-ordinator for the CRWRC (based in Grand Rapids, Mich.) put together the Nigeria Forum, a

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In this Issue

Comforting words for the year's end... p. 10

A 'saint' departs; another feels God's silence... p. 11

Can this be Victoria?



Victoria is not exactly in a snowbelt area of Canada. But this scene was captured on film by Sophie Ensing in 1992. It is part of a two-kilometre chip trail that runs through Swan Lake Nature Park. Do you see the park bench in this grove of evergreens?

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News

B.C. Liberals promise to slash spending

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The Liberals have promised to slash spending to balance the budget and start paying down B.C.'s debt.

Liberals only fiscally conservative

Ray Feenstra, a Reform Party activist and former veteran campaign manager for Social Credit, says an NDP loss is an "almost certain guarantee." He believes a Liberal victory will depend on whether people per-

ceive them as being honest.

"[Liberal leader] Gordon Campbell reminds me so much of Mulroney; the same promises, the same garbage," says Feenstra. "We'll have to wait and see if the phenomenon that happened in Ontario — where Harris walked past everybody — can repeat itself."

Feenstra notes the B.C. Reform Party's support in polls is "more solid" than the Liberals and says Reform will likely become the official Opposition.

He says that while the B.C. Liberals might be conservative fiscally, they are not conservative on social and moral issues.

"The Liberals are not so far removed from the NDP in the moral, philosophical outlook on life," Feenstra says, noting that the Liberals voted with the governing party on 44 out of 55 bills they passed.

These included a bill allowing same-sex adoptions, and "bubble-zone" legislation outlawing protests outside abortion

clinics. Only one Liberal MLA out of 17 voted against this bubble-zone legislation, while Abbotsford Liberal MLA John Van Dongen, a practising Catholic, hurried out of the Legislature rather than vote against his party on the issue.

Feenstra says the Reform Party will get the support of a significant percentage of Christians because it is more oriented towards family values. But he regrets that many Christians vote with their wallets instead of their principles.

"The Christian Reformed people themselves are more inclined to vote also with their morals than the general Christian population," says Feenstra. "But it's sad, really, that people [don't] think: 'What's good for the kids and the society structure?' rather than 'What's good for our wallet?'"

Margie Oevering, the B.C./Yukon representative for Citizens for Public Justice, gives the NDP government credit for tackling difficult environmental and Native issues.

But she says fundamental philosophical issues, such as the responsibilities of society and of government to the poor, are not being addressed by any of the major political parties — or by many Christians.

"I'd like to hear a dialogue about what the government is responsible for, and what our

responsibilities as Christians and Christian churches are," says Oevering, a Christian school teacher. "Somebody has to take responsibility for the poor and the mentally ill. They should not be out on the street."

Oevering says redirecting government priorities and tax dollars is a better approach than chopping spending to those people who are in need.

"I've heard strong opposition to the Conservative cuts from CPJ offices in Alberta and Ontario," she said. "There is no debate; it's all about dollars."

Native land claims should be a priority

Oevering says a priority of any B.C. government should be to settle Native land claims. She thinks Christians have an important role in building bridges to Natives and promoting cross-cultural understanding.

The Native land claim issue is shaping up to be a big one in the next election. No treaties were signed with Native bands at the turn of the century, and different claims by various bands encompass over 100 per cent of B.C.'s territory. Liberal leader Gordon Campbell has threatened to cancel NDP-negotiated treaties with Natives if the deals don't pass the test of "all British Columbians being treated equally."

Nigeria forum offers suggestions for action

...continued from page 1

group of Nigerian and North American Christians who have been working in Nigeria. They have been meeting periodically to discuss issues of concern affecting Nigeria.

In a recent memo to members of the forum, Vander Meulen noted that "oil is the key to understanding Nigerian politics. It is power politics. Who controls the oil determines who controls Nigeria.... The present military regime has used corruption in an unprecedented way to buy acquiescence. The consequences of this ... are further destructive of moral and ethical values."

You can show concern

The forum has offered some suggestions on action that can be taken to protest against the Nigerian government. One is to write to the Nigerian ambassador in the U.S. or Canada to express deep concern for the situation and strong support for efforts to promote justice. People could also write to "our Nigerian brothers and sisters both at an official (denominational/agency) level and at an individual level to express our concern and support, asking them what more we should be

doing on their behalf."

The group also suggested establishing lines of communication with Nigerian community groups that are working to bring about justice, and added, "Above all, we need to pray for and be taught by those who are daily living, struggling and coping in the daily fabric of Nigerian life as it is now."

'Conscientizing' us

Bev Abma works with CRWRC in Senegal, a neighboring country to Nigeria. She recently sent a memo to the Canadian CRWRC office offering some suggestions about what can be done to help resolve the situation in Nigeria. One is to "conscientize" Christians to justice and social issues the world over. The situation in Nigeria has many similarities to other parts of West Africa: the only ray of hope I have seen is in the areas of healing and reconciliation."

"Peace and guns don't mix," states Abma. "Reduction of arms manufacture is imperative! With the U.S. being the world's largest producer, that sends a clear message for a potential role for American Christian individuals and organizations.... Is there really a big difference between the situation that necessitates arms-detecting devices in American elementary schools and the lawlessness in Nigeria? Greed, fear and hate are the roots of both, and until we work at basic values all the political papers won't do a lot of good."

CRWRC has worked in Nigeria for 25 years, collaborating with Christian partner organizations and assisting the church in Nigeria to reach out to the poor. According to

CRWRC's Canadian office, its main goal in Nigeria is "to enhance the physical and spiritual welfare of the poor people by empowering them to improve their quality of life toward wholeness in Christ."

CR World Missions has been active in Nigeria much longer, with about 36 missionaries based there; World Missions co-operates with CRWRC on some projects. CRWRC's work in Nigeria will go on as usual, despite the political situation, reports CRWRC's Canadian director, Ray Elgersma. "I see no reason for its disruption," he says. "We've always had a reasonable relationship with the government."

Saro-Wiwa executed for stand against Nigerian government and oil companies

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — In late November, nine human rights activists were hanged after being accused by the Nigerian government of involvement in the murders of four Ogoni chiefs last year. The Ogonis are an ethnic group that live in the oil-rich Niger River delta area, known as Ogoniland.

Witnesses bribed

The nine-month trial of the activists was run by a military-appointed court. Several of the prosecution witnesses later admitted they had been bribed, and Ken Saro-Wiwa's entire defence team resigned after continual harassment, reports *Newsweek*. Saro-Wiwa was one of the most outspoken opponents of Nigeria's military regime.

In a letter written while in prison, Saro-Wiwa commented, "The prosecutor's case would not hold water even before the corrupt normal courts of Nigeria."

Saro-Wiwa was the founder of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, and was especially critical of international oil companies such as Shell which have been extracting billions of dollars worth of oil from Ogoniland while causing serious pollution and offering few jobs or benefits to the Ogonis.

In March 1993, Shell withdrew from Ogoniland after its pipelines were sabotaged. In May 1994, four pro-government tribal chiefs were burned alive by a mob of Saro-Wiwa's supporters, and the army accused Saro-Wiwa of encouraging the

killings. This led to his trial and execution.

South African president Nelson Mandela has warned Shell to suspend its planned new liquefied natural gas project in Nigeria or face action against Shell in South Africa.

Shell supporters oppose embargo

European Union members agreed on a ban of arms sales to Nigeria but ignored a call from South Africa for an oil embargo. Britain and the Netherlands vetoed the idea of an embargo. The U.S. also opposed an oil embargo, although the White House has condemned the executions.

Several countries, including the U.S., have withdrawn their ambassadors from Nigeria.




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News

Native and church leaders make commitment to reconciliation

Alan Doerksen

HULL, Quebec — A historic four-day "sacred assembly" involving aboriginal and non-native political and spiritual leaders took place in Hull, Quebec, in early December. Together, the participants drew up a reconciliation proclamation which recognized common goals and understandings and made commitments on both sides to work toward healing and reconciliation.

Native leader and Member of Parliament Elijah Harper was the main organizer of the assembly. During the recent stand-off between Natives and police in Gustafson Lake, B.C., Harper went there and issued a call for a sacred assembly, says Loraine Land, who is chair of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (a partnership group of church and aboriginal organizations) and a member of Citizens for Public Justice. Land took part in the sacred assembly along with representatives of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Christian Reformed, Presbyterian and United churches and such organizations as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Spiritual underpinnings

This was "the first time that the mainline and evangelical communities have come together" to discuss Native issues, says Land. The conference dealt with four main issues: "sacred foundations," spiritual reconciliation, aboriginal justice, and political responsibilities. There were large group meetings and smaller group discussions on each topic, along with some related cultural and spiritual events.

"The theme of the whole assembly was how spirituality underpins these issues," says Land.

On the first day, participants found a common spiritual base between them, despite their faith community, says Land. Day 2 was "a very moving day" in which the role of churches in Native communities was discussed, focusing on the confusion between sharing one's faith and sharing one's culture. Brian Stiller, executive director of EFC, spoke on the negative affects of churches and church-

run schools in Native communities.

Aboriginal leaders made a call for reconciliation within their own communities on the third day of the assembly. Representatives of South Africa's National Party and African National Congress also spoke about how South Africans came to Canada in the 1940s to look for a model for the apartheid system, reports Land.

On the fourth day of the assembly, Native and non-Native leaders focused on what action they could take to heal the hurts that exist between their people. They made plans to set up a council of reconciliation and drew up a reconciliation proclamation. This has already been sent to Ron Irwin, Canada's Minister of Indian Affairs, and he emphatically supports it, says Land.

Starting point of healing

The proclamation focuses on the common spiritual foundation of the participants, stating that: "we share ... the belief that the Creator God reigns supreme over all things; the land on which we live was created for the benefit of all." It also declared that aboriginals and non-aboriginal Canadians share the responsibility "to ensure the



Loraine Land

continuing integrity of the land and the unity and well-being of its inhabitants."

Both parties also recognize that "the sins of injustice which have historically divided aboriginal and non-aboriginal people remain active in our society today; concrete actions must be taken ... to overcome these injustices and to bind up the wounds of those who have suffered."

The proclamation declares that "the starting point for healing and reconciliation lies in personal communion with the Creator God ... Relations based

on justice will require respect for past treaties, a fair settlement of land rights disputes, the implementation of the inherent right of self-government ... and other institutions to support it."

Together, the participants made a commitment as individuals "to seek the personal guidance and counsel of elders and spiritual leaders in order to walk more closely with the Creator God...; to continue to explore with each other our sacred foundations in order to bring about spiritual reconciliation, aboriginal justice and the fulfilment of political responsibilities in this country...; to continue to respect the differences in our spiritual journeys, even as we seek to discover the common spiritual link between us."

The church and aboriginal leaders at the assembly committed themselves to continue to work toward healing and reconciliation between them. Church leaders offered to become stronger advocates for

justice and to offer programs of education and action on issues such as land rights, self-government and racism.

Symbolic stakes

The assembly closed with a special "staking" ceremony, in which ative leaders laid stakes at the feet of church leaders, who drove them into the ground. This is a traditional Cree ceremony in which both sides make themselves vulnerable and show their commitment to each other. It was "a way of showing physical commitment," comments Land.

Arie van Eek, executive secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada, was one of the leaders who took part in the staking ceremony. He says he is keeping the stake at his office to remind him of his commitment.

A second sacred assembly is being planned for the summer of 1997, and will focus mostly on youth.

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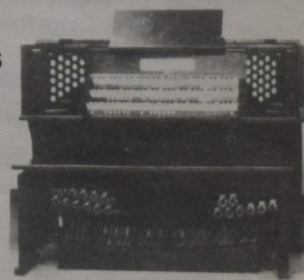
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Editorial

Nearer and nearer draws the time that shall surely be

When we come to the end of a year, our thoughts often go towards the end of time. We are reminded that another year has gone. Life is brief. Some of us have left this life in 1995 to be with the Lord. All of us know that our time, too, will come ... sooner than we think.

One century ago, Arthur Campbell Ainger wrote the words to a hymn that is included in the most recent official book of praise of the Christian Reformed Church, the 1987 *Psalter Hymnal*. The words are: "God is working his purposes out as year succeeds to year./ God is working his purposes out and the time is drawing near./ Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be./ When the earth shall be fill'd with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea."

Ainger wrote this hymn in 1894, probably close to the end of the year. The tune of this hymn has a steady and heavy kind of rhythm

that suggests a large group of people marching on into the future. And as they march, nearer and nearer draws "the time." What time is that? The last line says that it's the time "when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God." That's the end of time.

Isn't that a stretchable concept?

About 19 centuries ago, the Apostle John also said that the end times were close at hand when he wrote: "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near" (Rev. 1:3). A little further into the book of Revelation, in the letter to the Church in Philadelphia, Jesus is heard to say: "I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown" (Rev. 3:11).

To us human beings, for whom one day is like a thousand years, the idea of the end of time being near has been stretched to the limit. What did Jesus mean when he said, "I am coming soon"? How soon is soon? How near is the time when the earth shall be fill'd with the glory of God?

Let's look at this from a personal point of view. For all of us the end of time is what remains of our lives on earth. What does it matter to you who read this editorial whether Jesus Christ will return one year or a hundred years after you die? When your and my life ends, that's it: in the next moment of consciousness the earth will be filled with the glory of God. The time of Jesus Christ's return is as near as our death, which may come any day.

But there is, of course, another inexorable maturing of time taking place. When you see a pear ripening on a branch, you know that the time of harvest will not be delayed forever. Humanity is steadily marching to the end times. Life as we know it on earth will come to a halt, and Jesus will return in glory. The signs of our time are the signs of ripening.

Knowledge withheld for a reason

It's important for us to know that the end time is soon. We tend to be fooled by the past. We comfort ourselves with the thought that civilization has made it through 20 centuries since Christ. Is it likely that Christ will return in my lifetime? you or I may ask. And so we look forward to going to high school or college, to getting married, to having children, to being retired. We expect to live a full life. But that expectation is held in ignorance. We don't know when Christ will return.

Even Jesus did not know the time that his words of prophecy recorded in Matthew 24 would be fulfilled. "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36), he

said. This knowledge of "the time" has been withheld from humanity because it would have offered a false sense of security to us through the centuries, causing us to fall asleep.

From God's perspective, who walks through one century in less time than it takes us to walk through our house, "the time" has always been imminent. He knows the moment when the pail fills to the brim. He's doing us a favor by reminding us that the time is near. That way we will stay alert.

Advice for a time of crisis

The sense of crisis that John records in the end book of the Bible about the end times is highlighted by a strange piece of advice: "Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy."

Let him who is vile continue to be vile? Why not urge those who do wrong to change their ways? Because in a time of crisis there is no time to change. The die has been cast. Quickly, now, don't bother to pick up your belongings. Flee to the mountains.

And so God is encouraging people in crisis to hold on, not to give up. It's like saying to believers that the best way to anticipate the end of time at the year's end is to keep on doing in 1996 what they were doing in 1995.

Perhaps in mid-January we can lose that sense of crisis a bit and return to the theme of opportunity: "Repent and be baptized, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." But even then we don't want to forget that *nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be*. But what a time it will be: *the earth shall be fill'd with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea!*

BW

Now that's service!

A few decades ago, an American airline provided its passengers with the following card next to the food tray:

FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO SAY ... A TABLE GRACE

The prayers are:

Roman Catholic — "Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Jewish — "Lift up your hands toward the sanctuary and bless the Lord. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth."

Protestant — "Bless, O Lord, this food to our use, and us to thy service, and make us ever mindful of the needs of others, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Letters

Dobson rightly criticizes liberal feminism

After reading "Politicizing Family Values" by Bill Van Dyk in the Nov. 17 issue of CC, I was so annoyed that I wanted to cancel my subscription, but I reconsidered and renew it hereby.

Dr. Dobson is a man of God, who, besides Billy Graham, has done more for morality and family issues than any other person in the U.S.A. His books and videotapes are full of wisdom and insight for raising children and for the problems facing the world. He dares to speak up and is regarded an authority by the White House. I wish his books had been available when my family was

young; they would have helped me a lot.

Regarding the conference in Beijing — Dr. Dobson did not condemn Bill Clinton for sending a delegation to China, but for sending a delegation made up of liberal feminists, led by Madeleine Albright.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan criticized the conference's platform in her address to the delegates, calling it notably weak on the role of the traditional family. Dr. Margaret Oogala of Kenya was especially leery of the U.S. delegation.

Many bizarre activities occurred at

the conference. Here is a list of some of the workshop topics:

*Lesbianism for the curious

*Spirit and Action: lesbian activism from an inter-faith perspective

*Women in Black: a gathering of spirits

*Lesbian flirtation techniques

*How religious fundamentalism helps the spread of AIDS

*Lesbianism in the Baltics: new phenomenon of the '90s.

Many more workshops were held that had nothing to do with the family.

Senator Jesse Helms wrote: "I will

never understand why this kind of insanity occurs, especially at a conference purporting to be on 'women's rights.' What, pray tell, does a workshop on 'flirting techniques for lesbians' have to do with women's rights?"

I doubt whether Van Dyk was in Beijing himself. He must have his reports from the papers, since he "followed the Beijing conference with interest."

J. Braacx
Burnaby, B.C.

Van Dyk's Dobson not the man I know

When I received your paper dated Nov. 17, I was pleased to see an article on Dr. James Dobson. That is, until I read the article. I have listened to Dr. Dobson's radio program, Focus on the Family, for many years, and read a few of his books. I receive his mailings and strongly support his ministry.

Mr. Bill Van Dyk is obviously not that familiar with Dr. Dobson's ministry. In fact, he sensationalized Dr. Dobson in exactly the same way that he claims that Dr. Dobson has done to others. I find it hard to recognize the man Mr. Van Dyk describes in his article as Dr. James Dobson.

I also found it very offensive that Mr. Van Dyk compared Dr. Dobson to Jim Bakker or Jimmy Swaggart in his article. Mr. Van Dyk also fails to mention Dr. Dobson's strong Christian faith. I would not suggest that we blindly believe everything Dr. Dobson believes, but that

we do our own research, spend time in prayer and then follow the Holy Spirit's leading. I am sure that Dr. Dobson would be the first to agree.

Dr. Dobson does not promote any particular party. He tells us that we can't ignore politics or things happening in our government, but that we must stand up for our Christian beliefs. Each one of us must decide in which direction God is leading us. That doesn't mean we have to agree totally with Dr. Dobson or Mr. Van Dyk. The most important point here is that each one of us must answer to our Lord, and also that we must do our best to support brothers in Christ.

Negative articles with only a small

part of the whole picture can often do more damage than good. Therefore I hope that *Christian Courier* will consider doing another article on Dr. Dobson, letting people know how he started his ministry and how it was expanded over the years. The article should include Dr. Dobson's very deep and personal relationship with his God, and how he has tried to follow God's leading in every part of his life. He is a man with many gifts, and he gives all the glory to God.

Wynne Mosterd
Lindsay, Ont.

Woe to you, Mr. Editor

Your December 8 editorial was interesting but flawed, and certainly not balanced in the warning to banks. My rebuttal will be simple, borrowing from your own warning to the press:

Woe to you "politically correct" press who jump on band wagons without providing a balanced viewpoint. Focusing only on big numbers (dollars of profits) without the big picture distorts the truth, and headlines rarely give the whole truth. The banks are big, but shares are owned by many small investors. These billions of profits banks earned still only represent a 12 per cent return on equity. A 12 per cent return is reasonable, not great and certainly not excessive.

Clarence Bick
Ancaster, Ont.

Hielema's hutch a heavenly haven

For years those nasty animal rights activists have been complaining how cruelly and inhumanly veal calves are treated on farms. They say calves are kept in dark quarters and spend their time in a very small space where they can't even turn around. That's so consumers can feast on very tender meat.

Christian Courier and Bert Hielema (Nov. 3, p. 13) paint a way different picture of veal calves. The photo of a veal calf in a \$500 calf hutch stunned me. I mean, my dairy calves don't even get that kind of royal (heavenly) treatment. I

can't justify my calves being housed in such luxury. They're housed (after eight weeks) three or five to a pen.

Notice how CC's veal calf has so much room to turn around. And light? There's no darkness for this veal calf. Calf hutches are the coolest thing for calves in the summer, and warm and cozy in the winter.

Now, how are we going to convince those animal rights people?

Maynard Vander Galien
Renfrew, Ont.

Welcomes support for use at family gatherings

Just a word about your reply to Adrian Peetoom in the November 24 issue. He's fond of bringing up his worries about my generation of church members whenever family gathers, and I've been having trouble overcoming my

feelings of inadequacy well enough to make a cogent reply.

Thanks for the ideas — may I quote you?

Laura Peetoom
Lindsay, Ont.

Reader reminded of need of God's restoring mercy

Last week's editorial reflected on the destruction of the Bernardo house in St. Catharines. One of our readers watched as the wreckers went to work on the Bayview Drive house. He was graphically reminded of the capacity of each of us to do wrong, and of the overwhelming need for God's restoring mercy. We have granted his request to remain anonymous.

Reflections on Bayview

Today
I watched a house fall
collapse
steel jaws hungering to
expose
the horror of humanity
my humanity.
I wept.

Today
I watched a house fall
and wept:
my walls tumbling, crumbling
jaws of truth tearing to expose
the evil one?

Mirror mirror on the wall
am I not ugliest of all?

Today
a yawning chasm of horror
fills
with hope
springs eternal
echoing
echoing across the ages
innocence regained!
innocence reclaimed!

Today I wept.

News/Family

Guatemalan authorities murder street children, church group says

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala (EP) — A Catholic charity has released a report detailing the systematic torture of street children by police agents, according to Ecumenical News International (ENI).

The report, presented in November in Guatemala City, includes more than 30 cases of violence against children occurring between March 1990 and October 1995.

According to the ENI, 16 of the children mentioned in the report died after they were tortured by authorities, and two children who testified as witnesses against authorities were later killed.

Corrupt police

The 98-page document was prepared by Casa Alianza, a Roman Catholic charity that shelters street children in several countries. In the report, Casa Alianza charges members of Guatemala's national police, military police, treasury police, military commissioners and private police as well as one social worker for the human rights violations.

Casa Alianza's executive director, Bruce Harris, said violence against the children was shifting from national police to private security forces.

According to Harris, no national police agents were involved in the murder of street children.

Getting away with murder

In 1995, however, national police agents assisted in covering up a murder of a street child by helping a private police agent, who committed the act, dispose of the child's body.

Casa Alianza has initiated more than 200 legal cases against those who have abused street children in recent years, but only about 10 of those cases were ever resolved by authorities and only then after "tremendous international pressure" from groups including Amnesty International, Harris explained.

Mere lost statistics

"The rest of the cases have been filed away, lost or simply ignored," he said. "There are more than 20 outstanding arrest warrants for police officers who abused or killed street kids, but they're not enforced because the police don't like arresting fellow officers."

He concluded, "The major reason for this lack of justice is impunity. For street children, there is no justice in Guatemala."

Out of love for my husband

I made the decision to paint the door frames of the sliding glass door in the kitchen a bright aqua-turquoise. I did this without consulting my husband, Marty, who is, after all, less imaginative than myself. Even he would have to agree that anything was better than the natural dull grey metal.

When he showed some concern about my color choice, I assured him I had an overall strategy. "Don't worry, Honey, I know what I'm doing," I said, knowing he would fall in love with the idea once he saw the finished door. Less creative types have a hard time visualizing.

Several days and three coats later, Marty told me as gently as a husband can that I had made a mistake.

"Oh, you'll get used to it," I said brightly. "I'm making ruffled curtains to match for the window by the sink."

Giving in, but unconvinced

When the curtains were hung Marty remained unconvinced. I wasn't defeated, though. I began soliciting honest opinions.

Our children were noncommittal, or disinterested, or just plain wise to stay out of the discussion. My mother thought the color was tacky. My father considered it creative, but Marty's mom didn't really like it. Our friends mostly waltzed around the subject, seeing this as a family dispute.

The color choice hadn't worked out quite the way I expected. As the months passed, rather than Marty warming up to the aqua-turquoise on the door frames, I was beginning to question my own good judgment. Was it really tacky? Would the room look better if the door frames were blue or boring brown or even harvest gold to match my trusty old appliances?

Marty finally suggested painting the door a pale yellow to match the walls. By then, I was at least ready to admit that he disliked the aqua-turquoise more than I like it. So you might say out of love for my husband I repainted the door frames a pale yellow.

In need of correction

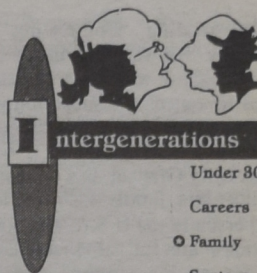
This time the work took even longer than the first time. Painting a light color over a bright color is rather a tedious business, especially when it's not your own idea.

After two coats, Marty examined my work. "Guess it needs a third coat, eh?" was the advice he offered. I knew that: I could see the bits of aqua-turquoise poking through. Still, it made me angry for him to say it.

Yet once that third coat was on, I had to admit the pale yellow looked great.

The relationship between Christ and his Church can be a lot like this husband/wife thing. We in the Church sometimes insist on doing things our own way. After all, we *are* the Church. We know how to worship, how to run programs, how to evangelize. Of course the Lord will approve our decisions. After all, he gave us these responsibilities.

But Christ patiently waits for his Bride to come around.



Under 30

Careers

Family

Seniors



Marian den Boer, her husband and five children are enjoying pale yellow door frames in their kitchen in Hamilton, Ont.



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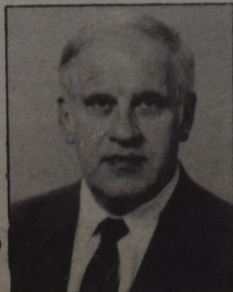


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page 18.

An indispensable bird-watching tool

A Bird-Finding Guide to Ontario

By Clive E. Goodwin.

Completely revised and updated edition.

Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1995.

ISBN 0-8020-6904-5. xii, 477 pp. \$24.95.

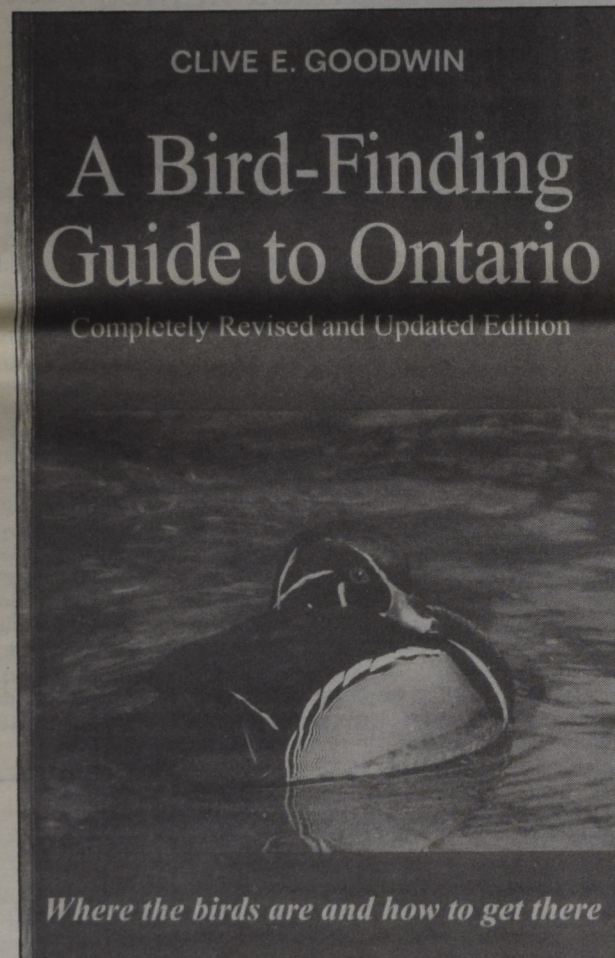
If you're a birder and live in or travel to Ontario, this book is indispensable. The book first appeared 13 years ago and was well worth having, but this revised edition is a substantial improvement. It contains not only updated, but more and better information. The author was the Ontario regional editor of *American Birds*, and was executive director of the Conservation Council of Ontario for 17 years. He is now a free-lance naturalist and tour leader who lives in Cobourg, Ontario.

Ontario has some 450 bird species, 285 of which are known to have nested in the vast area and varied climate and topography of the province. This guide divides the province into 16 major bird-watching areas and then subdivides those into 41 (yes, 41!) areas, with 41 maps.

Each chapter presents a kind of self-guided bird-watching tour of a particular area of Ontario, with information on what birds, habitats and weather conditions you're likely to find where. Bird species from the common to the rare are covered.

Wide-ranging information

The best aspect of this book comes from the fact that it is imminently useful to both the serious birder and the week-end or occasional bird-watcher. With a broad audience in



mind, the first chapter details ways in which you might use the book. There are suggestions for you if you are unfamiliar with the province, if you are interested in a specific locality or a specific bird, or if your time is limited.

There's a chapter, too, "For the Visitor," with information on public transit, road systems throughout Ontario, accommodation, "finding like minds," the phone numbers for bird-sighting hotlines throughout the province, a bibliography of other helpful books, and even a section on "hazards large and small."

The book's grand finale (not counting the fairly extensive index) is a "systematic list" of bird species, including bar graphs visualizing how common specific species are in southern areas of Ontario. This is quite helpful, though not comprehensive due to the sheer size of the province.

This book will be a useful gift for yourself or for any bird lover you know.

Media/Arts



Agreeable fare for adolescent girls

Jenny's Secret

By Joan Dower Kosmachuk.

Windflower Communications,

1995. ISBN: 0-895308-18-6. 77

pp. \$6.99 (Cdn); \$5.49 (US).

Jenny has a secret which is hard for a junior high school girl to keep, and difficult to handle.

This story raises issues about how adolescent girls fit into their families, about their daughter/mother relationship (especially when their mother is a single parent), and about having a best friend. Those issues reinforce the central theme of adoption. Kosmachuk's characters are Christian, and their faith seems natural; but she's not necessarily assuming a Christian audience.

Joan Kosmachuk is executive director of Jewels for Jesus Mission and Adoption Agency. So it's natural that her knowledge of adoption should come up in her writing and that she should promote adoption when possible. Nevertheless, this book is far from being an adoption tract. It's a well-written



story with an interesting plot and believable dialogue. The relationship between Jenny and her friend Rebecca is particularly well-drawn. (Well, maybe Jenny's a bit *too* good a kid, and much less self-fixated than a lot of adolescents are.)

Kosmachuk says her purpose in writing is "to present challenging options for the issues young teens face." She succeeds in fulfilling that purpose.

U.S. Post Office is a Scrooge, say 'Merry Christians'

PORTAGE, Mich. (EP) — The Fellowship of Merry Christians (FMC) has given its 1995 Scrooge Award to the U.S. Postal Service for collaborating on a policy which bans the use of decorative signs or messages saying "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Hanukkah" in post office lobbies.

At the same time, FMC gave its "True Spirit of Christmas Present" to David Rupert, acting postmaster of Jackson, Wyoming, and chaplain of the National League of Postmasters. Rupert was honored for his relentless effort to get postal officials in Washington, D.C., to lift the ban, which has been in place since last year.

The Postal Service's rationale for the ban is to avoid a supposed "appearance of favoring any particular religion or religion itself."

Postal workers may use

terms like "Happy Holidays," "Season's Greetings," "Happy Mother's Day" and "Happy Valentine's Day." (One critic has pointed out that postal officials apparently don't know that St. Valentine was a Christian martyr beheaded in A.D. 270.)

Though Rupert has gotten much support in his opposition to the ban, officials so far have refused to budge. *USA Today* columnist Joe Urshel wrote: "Christmas generates enormous business for the Post Office and it wants you to use its service to deliver your packages and cards. But what is the one word they avoid in this promotional rush? 'Christmas!'"

And writing in the *Federal Times*, Ed Winsten suggested a new holiday slogan postmasters could use, taking off from the popular song: "It's beginning to look a lot like mid-to-late December!"

Church

India's churches stand by Mother Teresa amidst criticism by high-ranking Hindu priest

CALCUTTA, India (EP) — A number of churches in India held public protests after the country's highest-ranking Hindu priest accused Catholic nun and world-famous humanitarian Mother Teresa of using her charity work to try to convert India's Hindus to Christianity, according to Ecumenical News International.

Talking to journalists October 20, Nischalananda Saraswati Maharaj, the Hindu priest who is the Sankaracharya (monastery leader) of Puri, a seaport in India and the Bay of Bengal, launched a public campaign against the nun, saying, "She has engaged in conversion in the name of human service. If

Mother Teresa wants to serve humanity, she should stop converting Hindus to Christianity."

Days after the Sankaracharya made the statements against Mother Teresa, a number of churches protested the announcement, including the Baptist Union and the Assemblies of God.

The United Forum of Catholics and Protestants in India issued this statement regarding the Catholic nun: "All the world knows about the service of Mother Teresa. Nothing will shake the trust hundreds of millions of people have in her. She is a mother to all India."

Mother Teresa, who celebrated her 85th birthday in

August, is famous for her work with the poor and for the religious order she established, the Sisters of Charity, which has 537 houses in 137 countries ministering to lepers, the terminally ill and orphans.

Mother Teresa's work has recently become a subject of debate in Europe and the U.S. A famous British journalist stirred up controversy when he accused the nun of being more interested in mixing with the rich and powerful than in saving the poor and sick.

Controversial figure

The Sankaracharya of Puri also claimed that the number of Hindus in northeast India was

dwindling because of "conversions going on under the guise of serving the people," the report continued.

Saraswati was appointed 145th Sankaracharya of Puri in 1992. Among India's Sankaracharyas, the Sankaracharya of Puri is generally accepted as the highest-ranking. He caused an uproar several years ago when he declared that women had no right to recite the Vedas, the an-

cient and sacred scriptures of India. During the ensuing controversy, he said that he had been misquoted.

Recently, the Sankaracharya of Puri said India was "full of fake Sankaracharyas" and criticized political parties for giving their support to "charlatans." His remarks were seen as a veiled reference to Chandraswami, a swami who is close to the Indian Prime Minister.

'Prayer for Christian unity' week hopes to 'open the door'

TORONTO (CCC) — The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be celebrated across Canada in local churches of various denominations from Jan. 21 to 28, 1996. The week is sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches.

This year's theme is "Opening the Door."

"The doors of reconciliation and community can remain closed due to complacency or fear," notes a Canadian Council

of Churches press release. "Centred on Revelation, our daily prayers will focus on 'opening the doors' — to Christ and to each other."

Liturgical and educational resources for the week are combined in a kit which sells for \$15.95. Reproducible services and Bible readings are included, as well as service "rubrics" and planning suggestions. The format makes it easy for parishes and congregations to adapt the

material to their own needs. The resources are not dated and can be used throughout the year. Each kit contains:

- * Worship service
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South Africa names Muslim to board of Christian university

POTCHEFSTROOM, S. Africa (REC) — In August, the minister of education in South Africa named a Muslim to the board of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. The man appointed was E. Sooliman, the current mayor of Potchefstroom.

In May of this year a local church council in Potchefstroom sent a letter to the minister of education in which it was noted that the minister had the power to appoint a certain number of board members to Potchefstroom University. The church council noted the role of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA) in founding the university and that denomination's long and close association with the university. The minister was urged to appoint only Christians to the

board.

The minister's office replied that he took note of their position, and that they should rest assured that the minister would appoint only Christians to the Board of Potchefstroom University. That assurance was broken by the August appointment.

In the GKSA's church paper, *Die Kerkblad*, C.F.C. Coetzee called on the university's supporters and the church to reject the appointment and exert themselves to have it withdrawn.

In the same issue, a writer noted that two student organizations were demanding that Potchefstroom University become a bilingual university, (adding English to Afrikaans). They further demanded that the university abandon its specifically Christian character.

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RBC prof translates Reformed classic on church history

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — Reformed Bible College professor Dr. Lyle D. Bierma has translated a book on Reformation teachings from the German original.

Baker Book House and Pater-noster Press have just released the book in the U.S. and the United Kingdom, respectively. The book is entitled *A Firm Foundation: An Aid to Interpreting the Heidelberg Catechism* by Caspar Olevianus (1536-87). This was translated from the German and edited by

Bierma. The book is the first volume in Baker's new series *Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Protestant Thought* (Richard A. Muller, general editor).

Fulbright recipient

Appointed to teach at Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids in 1980, Bierma holds a BA degree from Calvin College, a BD from Calvin Theological Seminary, and a PhD from Duke University. During his graduate work at

Duke, he received a Fulbright Fellowship to do research for a year at the University of Tübingen in Germany. His doctoral dissertation on Olevianus, originally written at Duke in the 1970s, will be published by Baker in early 1996.

At RBC Bierma teaches courses such as History of Western Christianity, Christian Doctrine, Calvinism, and the History of Missions. Also, he currently serves as chairperson of the board of trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary.

Church

Faith comes in two layers

"You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder" (James 2:19).

John Calvin said that there were two aspects to faith: *assentia* and *fiducia*. The first we know as "assent." We acknowledge that something exists. It is the knowing at a distance.

The latter aspect of faith we might call "trust." It involves us personally in a relationship with whatever we might have previously acknowledged.

Take a chair, for instance. *Assentia* is our willingness to say that it *could* hold the person daring to sit on it. *Fiducia* is the act of sitting on that chair ourselves, trusting its sturdiness to hold our own bulk. Both are elements of faith. Both are important. But until the latter is added to the former, faith remains inert, distant, intellectual, impersonal.

Dr. E. Stanley Jones told of an incident from his missionary days that illustrates this point which James makes in the verse above. A young girl got tired of things at home, said Jones. She longed for the freedom of the streets and the excitement of the night life. She ran away to a large city.

It wasn't long before she fell into the hands of a pimp and became a prostitute.

Restless and protective love

Her mother was beside herself. Sure, things hadn't been going right between them. But a mother's love is restless and protective, and she needed to find her daughter again. She needed to renew their bond. She wasn't sure how to begin the search. All she'd heard were rumors about the girl — now wasting her body in the red-light district.

So the mother went to look for her daughter. Up one street and down the next. Talking to anyone who would listen. Hoping for a clue to follow. But to no avail. Her daughter didn't want to be found; shame, rebellion, spite.... Who can say what reasons mingle in our deceptive minds?

'A picture is worth a thousands words'

Eventually the quest tired even the mother. But before she returned home, she did one more thing. She had a photograph that was taken long before, a picture of the two of them, mother and daughter, at a happier moment in both their lives. She got the photograph enlarged. She made dozens of copies. Then she scattered those pictures around the area, hoping that one would catch her daughter's eye.

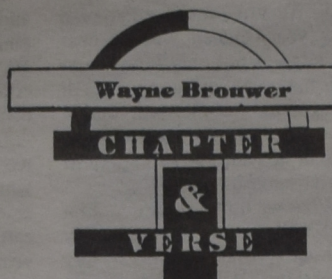
On each photo she penned these five words: *Come home! I love you!*

And one day the girl did see. And she began to remember what love was all about. She called her mother. And she came home.

Never once did the daughter stop *assenting* to the fact that she had a mother. But it wasn't until her mother's love called out the *trust* of her heart that she believed in all that "home" and "mother" and "love" could mean to her personally.

If James were to take a picture of your faith today, how much depth would it show?

Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.



Church leaders struggle with war and nationalism at Hungary meeting

KECSKEMET, Hungary (REC) — With the ending of communists regimes in Eastern Europe, the world has seen the emergence of raw nationalism, often supported by religious ardor. Conflicts fuelled by religion are common in parts of the former Soviet Union. Orthodox contend with Roman Catholics in the Ukraine and the former Yugoslavia. Reformed Protestants are set against Catholics in Slovakia and the Orthodox in Romania.

In late August, some 120 church leaders gathered for the Ecumenical Conference on Christian Faith and Human Enmity at Kecskemet, Hungary. Protestants, Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Anglicans from a dozen countries met for seven days to look for ways to break the cycle of enmity and violence.

Christian Century reporter Donald Ottenhof noted that it was risky to bring such a group together. "They may retire into polite silence or simply exchange denunciations," he

wrote. And those tactics were present, but they were not disruptive enough to derail the conference. When the Romanian Orthodox were criticized for their treatment of the Hungarian Protestant minority in Romania, they were silent. They noted, however, that their silence did not mean they agreed with the accusations.

Sharp differences, but measured responses

There were sharply differing accounts of the situation, but responses were measured and reasoned, Ottenhof reported. While the Serbian Orthodox were attacked for their support of a Greater Serbia, a Serbian representative replied that the Bosnian Serbs were "really under siege."

The conference decided to issue a pastoral letter rather than a declaration. This modest attempt included no special demands or instructions for warring parties. Instead it reflected on the shortcomings and sins of the participants.

They confessed they had become enemies who "inflict unspeakable suffering upon each other."

Five affirmations

They also pledged to work in the future in the light of five affirmations: 1) That the earth on which we live is God's gift to all human beings... and we have no right to claim it exclusively for our religious, national or racial community; 2) that the diversity of languages, cultures, ethnicity and belief can enrich our communities; 3) that God does not approve or bless any type of distortion or degradation of human dignity; 4) that the abuse and manipulation of religious faith for the purpose of waging war and the use of other forms of violence to dominate and torture others is reprehensible; and 5) that different ethnic and religious groups can live together in peace and that the ideology and practice of 'ethnic cleansing' is rejected.

Czech underground church may get recognition from Rome

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — The Vatican may soon create a special diocese to accommodate married priests who were secretly ordained during the communist era in the former Czechoslovakia. Up to 250 priests and 16 bishops were ordained in the underground church, but usually without any written records.

Many of the priests were married. They were recruited to build up the number of clergy. It was also easier for a married person to conceal his status as priest. The Vatican is planning to create a Greek Catholic diocese for these priests. Greek Catholic dioceses remain loyal to Rome, while following Eastern Orthodox ritual, which allows ordinary priests to marry. The bishops who were consecrated would not be recognized.

A more difficult problem for Rome is the possibility that there were women ordained as priests in the underground church. Recently a 65-year-old woman has stepped forward

with the claim that she was ordained by Bishop Felix Davidek. Davidek feared the communists might wipe out the official church. Although the woman, Ludmila Javorova, has

written to Pope John Paul II explaining the circumstances of her ordination, there has been no reply yet.

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Feature

Kept now and forever

(From a New Year's Eve sermon)

Sidney Cooper

Scripture: Jude

Text: Jude 24, 25

There is no better way to end the year than with the Word of the Spirit in our lap and the Spirit of the Word in our hearts and to do this in the assembly of the saints. It's good to gather and to be quiet for a few moments in the presence of the Lord.

When we leave this old year behind and enter a new year of our Lord the clock ticks on, and we must know where we are at. Times get shorter and we must make the most of what is left.

And he will keep us not only for now; he will keep us forever. Can any of us fathom this? As we anticipate a new year, Jude assures us that God will some day present us before his glorious presence without fault.

You are destined for glory! — preserved today from every danger; and tomorrow you will be presented without blemish and faultless before the presence of the Lord. It seems incredible, but it's God's wondrous promise.

We should not be surprised that Jude ends his epistle on a very high note. Let's call it a doxology. When you remember these three factors: the dangers that surround us, the preservation of the saints, and our eventual

awesome.

Let's remember his keeping power as we enter a new year. He has not failed us in the past; and he will be a faithful guide even unto death, and through death unto life that is forever.

Jude does not say that God will keep you from falling. He says that God is *able* to keep you from falling. There is a difference.

We have stumbled and fallen par for the course. We cannot blame our falls on God. "All we like sheep have gone astray." When we fall, it is always our own fault. Let's never blame God. But we do confess that God is able to keep us from falling, even from stumbling. He is able, so amazing is his grace.

So in the context of danger and even of peril, you are surrounded by God your Keeper: "He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not slumber." Indeed, "he who

worthless to gaze into a crystal ball. We are on the edge of a new year, indeed we are near the edge of not only a new century but a new millennium. Will we get to see the year 2000? Who knows? Not even the angels in heaven know the day of Christ's coming.

What we do know is this: that God will present us some day without spot, or blemish or any such thing. We will be perfect in him.

And today we are closer to our presentation than before; we have never been this close! Perhaps we need again the reminder of our Lord: "I come quickly." He said that almost 2,000 years ago. If it was true then, it is even truer now. He

It is great fun to play hide and seek with one's grandchildren. After counting up to 10, I yell: "Ready or not, here I come." Well, Christ is coming back soon now, ready or not!

It's time for us to make sure we have enough oil in our lamps. No one wants to run out at the critical hour. That hour can be any hour of this new year.

Keep alert

Keep alert to the surrounding dangers and rest tonight in the powerful Word of God that he is able to keep you from falling, and to present you before his glorious presence "without fault and with great joy."

You are kept, now, tonight,

"God stations guards all about us."

presentation to God in glory, then the doxology is understandable.

Let us join in ascribing praise to God: "To the only God and our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!"

I want to concentrate on verse 24: "To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy."

Jude focuses on the keeping power of God. God preserves you. He keeps

you from falling. Jude uses a very strong word for "keep." God *stations guards* all about us. A Brinks truck drives up to a store to pick up or deliver money; and armed guards make the delivery, alert to any possible robbery attempts. The truck is bullet proof.

God guards you and me like that. His guarding, keeping, power is ever-present and

watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep."

"The Lord watches over you; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm; he will watch over your life. The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."

Your presentation in glory

God not only preserves us *now*; he will keep on preserving us tomorrow and into all the tomorrows that are to come. *Forever* is the word. Who among us can begin to fathom what *forever* means? It is far beyond our comprehension. There are no words in the English language, or in any language, for that matter, to tell us what is in store for us as the people of God.

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things God has prepared for those who love him." Some day, and it may be sooner than you think, God will present you before his glorious presence, "without fault and with great joy."

None of us can predict what a day will bring forth. How



hasn't changed his mind. His return looms on the horizon.

Ready or not

"Be ready, for in such a time as you think not, the Son of Man comes." God is following his own divine time table, not ours. He is building for eternity. A thousand years with the Lord is as one day. As Christ came in the fullness of time, so he will return in the fullness of time.

and forever. No wonder we can look back and look ahead with our heads held high, with our spirits soaring, filled with this doxology: *To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore.*

Rev. Sidney Cooper is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Samia, Ont.



We end the year with the book of Jude. Jude helps focus our hearts on matters that count for tonight and for all time. Jude lived in uncertain and even scary times, and so do we. We need the reminder that in such dangerous times we have a sure and safe hiding place. God is close by, and he is able to keep you from falling, says Jude. He can and will protect us in perilous times.

Feature

A joyous departure

Wilma Jonkheer

Jim had been a patient on the ward I had been assigned to while taking clinical pastoral education in one of the hospitals in our area.

Jim was one of the people Jesus had had compassion on when he saw the multitudes. Jim suffered from deep depressions which made him incapable of functioning for very long outside the hospital. There were times he suffered so intensely that he was unable to speak. All I could do then was walk beside him, up and down the hall, back and forth, back and forth. At times like that the sacrament of my presence seemed to mean more to him than my words. Finally the tears would come; then finally a few words, and I would know he would be able to cope again.

WILMA JONKHEER



This photo, taken in a conservation area next to the Whitby Mental Health Centre, captures the feeling of peace and the theme of new life that the story evokes.

Deep commitment

In all his suffering Jim deeply loved the Lord. Even during his temporary stay outside the hospital he would ride his bike to the chapel. The rain would come and the snow would fall, but Jim never missed a service.

Jim had not been well lately and he had not been able to attend chapel. Then one morning

I received word he had passed away during the night.

Less than 10 people came to pay Jim their last respects. Filtered sunlight rested on the simple casket and it seemed as though Jim's gentle spirit still permeated the chapel.

The funeral procession was made up of two cars and the hearse. The manager of nursing and two of Jim's friends rode with me. There were no family members, no police escort; the city had provided a grave.

We came to a halt beside a

mound of dirt and an open grave. Yet the promise of a new spring and the signs of new life would be all around Jim. Soft green grass would soon cover the mound again and the willow tree would continue to sprout new leaves.

'He told me about you'

The priest invited Jim's friend, Bill, to take part in the ceremony and Bill sprinkled handfuls of dirt on the blue casket. He then prayed a prayer that came straight from his heart, a torrent of words as fresh and uninhibited as the rolling notes of the robin's song overhead, and ending with, "He was a good man, Lord. He stopped smoking and he never swore, and he even told me about you."

As I stood at the grave of this gentle saint I felt a sense of joy mingle with the sadness I felt about his death. This had been an infinitely joyous occasion: I had witnessed the departure of a modern-day Lazarus. Like Lazarus in the parable, how pitiful had been Jim's life here on earth. Yet how gloriously rich must have been his entry into the heavenly kingdom.

We left as quietly as we had come.

Wilma Jonkheer lives in Whitby, Ont. She studied clinical pastoral education at the Whitby Mental Health Centre, Whitby, Ont.

The silence of God

*Like the deafening roar of a waterfall
which one can't drink
is the silence
of God*

*Like a letter sent to one loved
to which there is no reply*

*Like the shifting evening mist
steaming from a distant shore
I cannot swim the depths to reach it
Sunrise finally blazes
the mist lifts
What I thought I could see clearly has escaped*

*As the playing of an empty tape
that once held chords of joy
the title is still penned on the sticker
distortion hisses from the recorder
the memories, a sigh, and
the silence*

*Like a decaying homestead and a watermill alone
backdropped by the setting sun*

*I know there were days when children played
but the wool has grown tall
and the wood has termites
I stand grasping at the wind
through time hearing
echoes*

*When time stands still
And pain sits long
Love and Hope are crushed
Can Faith be gone?*

*Endless questions to which there is no answer
The guilty and the lawyer and the jury have arrived
to reach a verdict
But the judge remains unseen*

*Like a precious memory from which only fragments
can be remembered
Like watching another live your dreams flippantly
while you are forgotten
Like awakening to sunlight, dressing lightly,
and being overcome by rain
This is the silence of God*

*a heart aches too much to speak
lips fail
hands wring —*

*Oh that I could know that one thing precious
The smile of His lips
The answer to my cries*

*Others may have their diversions
Complain of small infractions
Shed tears over houses and empires of sand
They do not understand how I can miss the thing
they have never known — His Presence*

That the silence of God may be broken!

**Wayne W. Bos
Sedgewick, Alta.**

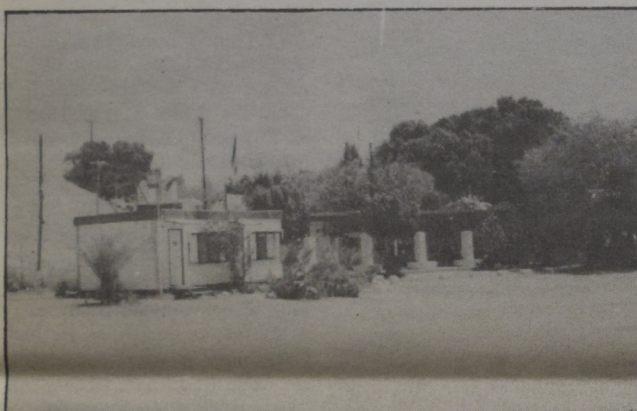
Wayne W. Bos trained for the ministry at Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hill, Alta. Since a nervous breakdown forced him from the Open Air Campaigners in 1990, Wayne works as a 2nd year apprentice at McLennan Chrysler in Killam, Alta. This poem was written during a time of poor health.

Feature

The plight of Palestinian believers

Part Three

During the months of June and July, David Koyzis travelled with his fiancée, Dr. Nancy Calvert, with another couple and their children, and a group of 44 Wheaton College students to the eastern Mediterranean region. Their journey began in Greece and took them to Israel, Jordan, Egypt and finally to Rome, where the Wheaton tour ended. Following the completion of the formal part of the tour, Koyzis and Calvert spent two weeks on the island of Cyprus, where David's father was born. In this third of four articles, Koyzis presents his impressions of the political situation in Israel and the occupied territories, and particularly the plight of Palestinian Christians.



Part of the West Bank city of Jericho, now under the flag of the Palestinian Authority.

David T. Koyzis

We were hardly surprised to find for ourselves that Israel and the West Bank are lands of tension and conflict. But being there for three weeks made us profoundly aware of the level of animosity between the peoples living there. Most obvious is the ubiquitous military presence. In or out of uniform, Israeli soldiers are everywhere, easily identified by the huge machine guns slung over their shoulders. Military checkpoints are stationed at the entrances to the occupied territories and around the autonomous Palestinian city of Jericho.

During our visit, several newsworthy events took place. Israel and Syria entered into direct negotiations aimed at bringing about peace between the two countries. A deadline for an agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) expired without agreement being reached, leading to riots in Jericho. The radical Islamic group, Hizbollah, launched a rocket attack from its base in Lebanon on the Club Med in Nahariya (where,

needless to say, we weren't staying). And, of course, the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was still five months away.

'Apartheid' alive and well

What touched me more than the biblical sites we visited was the human situation in that country. A year after apartheid ended in South Africa, something similar is alive and well in Israel and the occupied territories. This is a country whose political system clearly favors one class of citizens over another. Obviously, Palestinian Arabs bear the brunt of an unjust political system, but even thoughtful Israelis regret that they have been put in the distasteful position of oppressing fellow human beings.

I found myself most easily identifying with Palestinian Christians, who are a minority in the region, though they tend to predominate in the cities of Bethlehem, Nazareth and Ramallah. Our group had the opportunity to meet a large number of Palestinian Christians, including well-known relief worker and activist Nora Kort, and Pas-

tor Mitri Raheb and the parishioners of the Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem.

The most moving such encounter was with a kindly 51-year-old, Christian man whom I shall call John. John works at a bookstore in the Christian Quarter of the Old City. He was extremely hospitable to Nancy and me, and we took to him immediately. I began to ask him questions about politics and his own life in that part of the

A year after apartheid ended in South Africa, something similar is alive and well in Israel and the occupied territories

world, and he opened up to us in a rather extraordinary way.

John was born in Lod in 1944 in what was still the old British Mandate of Palestine. In 1948, during the war for Israeli independence, all of the Palestinian Arabs in Lod were rounded up and expelled from the city and the surrounding area, whose clearance made possible the building of Ben Gurion Airport. John's family escaped into what became Jordanian territory and is now the West Bank. He still carries a Jordanian passport, though his actual citizenship is unclear. He lives outside Jerusalem proper in the occupied zone, and he has permission of the military authorities to stay in the Old City only until 7 p.m., at which time he must be out.

A stranger in the land of his birth

Having myself had relatives who became refugees, I couldn't help but sympathize with a man who is now, in effect, a stranger in the land of his birth.

"Certainly," he told me, "the Jews were oppressed in Europe, but we Arabs had nothing to do with that. Yet we're the ones who are now suffering. Why should people from Russia and Ethiopia be able to come here and live, yet we who were born in this land are unable to do so? These immigrants have rights,

but we do not."

What did he think were the prospects for peace in Israel and the West Bank? The current efforts are a start, he believed, though the Palestinian Authority in Jericho and Gaza is too insignificant to be much good. Real peace, he believed, can only come with the Prince of Peace. Remarkably, despite the suffering he has experienced in half a century, John was still able to talk of forgiveness, which made a deep impression on us.

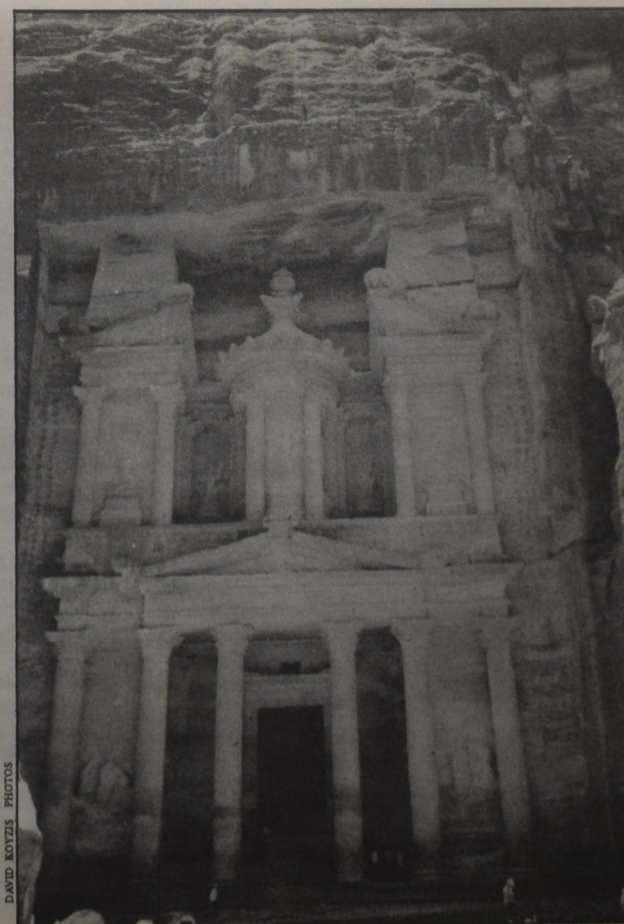
Sadly, and perhaps more ominously for the future of the country, many of the young people at the Lutheran Christmas Church said they are unable to forgive. Some of them had been jailed by the occupation authorities, and a few had even been tortured.

Now, with the extension of the Palestinian Authority throughout more of the West Bank, the territory's ultimate future remains to be deter-

mined. A Palestinian state could come into being. If it does, the plight of Christians may or may not improve. If a group such as Hamas should gain control of this state, Christians could be worse off than they are under Israeli military authority. Not unexpectedly, many Palestinian Christians have left the region entirely and are settling elsewhere, including North America.

Those who remain need our prayers. I would like to challenge our readers regularly to bring before the throne of grace the plight of these sisters and brothers in Christ. Despite the fact that most North American Christians are unaware of the existence of Palestinian believers, we are bound together with them in the communion of saints.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont.



A temple sculpted into the side of a cliff in Petra, southern Jordan

Comment / News

An unexpected communion of the saints

Eve Mazereeuw worked in Shenyard, China, for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) for two years (1987-89) teaching English. The following, written in the present tense, describes how a lonely Christmas in China had an unexpected outcome.

Eve Mazereeuw

Every year that I can remember I have attended a Christmas Eve and a Christmas Day church service. Often these candlelit services have been a highlight of the festive season for me. This year I am in China, alone.

My family always gathers for

the holidays, so I've been dreading this year's Christmas alone. Today is Christmas Eve and someone has hired a bus to take all interested "expats" to the one Protestant church.

We arrive after the worship service has begun. The church is crowded and Chinese people are listening outside the door because there is no more room inside. We, the 15 foreigners, are hustled past these worshippers, and with much commotion, Chinese people in the back pews are asked to give up their seats for the "important" foreigners.

I am extremely embarrassed. I sit miserably squished into the tight pew, watching the Christmas program being

presented in Chinese, which I don't understand.

What am I doing here, crowding out a Chinese person who could probably appreciate the festive activities? Some of those displaced worshippers may even be parents of the children making presentations.

With much fuss

To make matters worse, before the celebration has ended most of the expats decide that they have seen enough and so, with much fuss we rise as a group and noisily file out of the service.

What a disaster! All through our celebrations this evening, I continue to squirm under the memory of our intrusive church

visit.

Our Chinese employers have generously given us Christmas Day off, though, of course, this is a regular working day for them. My American neighbor has hired a car to take them back to the Protestant church and he invites me to come along. I have no plans for the day, so in spite of last night's embarrassment, I decide to join him. Just like yesterday, we arrive after the service has begun. However, since many people have to work today, the church is much emptier.

We quietly sit down in the back pews beside other expats. We join the whole congregation in singing familiar Christmas carols, they in Chinese, we in

English. The sun is streaming cheerily through the windows, and the pastor begins his Christmas sermon. Gradually, I begin to relax. Even though I cannot understand what is being said, I feel at one with the people around me. After the sermon, we are even invited to come to the front and sing an English carol for the congregation. Then, together we close with a bilingual chorus of "Joy To The World."

This morning I have joined with them instead of displacing them. Despite our separate languages, we are unified in our praise to God. Today in this church I have experienced a small measure of peace on earth.

Repentance has radical repercussions

Man's new Christian faith prompts him to confess to 20-year-old double homicide

BURNSVILLE, Minn. (EP) — One Sunday in September, a church member told the Rev. Roger Thompson that he wanted to confess something.

"He approached me after our third service on Sunday morning, when we have a time for prayer and dealing with personal issues," said Thompson, who has pastored the 1,500-member Berean Baptist Church in suburban Minneapolis for five years.

"He said he wanted to confess a crime he committed many years ago, and he wanted my help in talking to the authorities and making it right."

Then John Claypool, 34, told Thompson that 20 years ago he murdered a man and his wife.

"It was a big surprise," noted Thompson. "I was naturally pretty shocked, but on the other hand I was gratified. We're in the business of wanting God to change people radically, and it's very humbling and gratifying to hear someone who has taken to heart the gospel and his own personal walk to such a depth."

"He fully understood that he didn't need to confess to me to get forgiveness, that God has forgiven him and washed away his sins and made him clean. But he also knew that God had been nudging him to make this right."

Claypool was 14 at the time of the killings. He told authorities that he had experimented with LSD just weeks before the killings, and he had been high on drugs and alcohol the night before the shooting.

Murder on impulse

He lived in Lake City, Minnesota, at the time, next door to the city's mayor Wilmer "Tony" Strickland and his wife, Verona. He had known them for about six years. Claypool said he liked the Stricklands, but murdered them on an impulse, just to see what it felt like to kill someone. He shot them to death with a .22-caliber rifle.

Authorities suspected Claypool, but had no evidence to charge him. In the next few years, Claypool dropped out of school and ran away from home. In recent years he worked for various boat companies.

He is divorced and has visitation right with his two daughters. His life changed when he became a Christian. He began attending Berean Baptist Church in Burnsville about two years ago, and decided on his own that he needed to come to terms with his past.

"When he came to me he knew what he wanted to do," said Thompson. "I did not have

to try to motivate him; he was already motivated by his relationship with God."

Claypool confessed to the crimes even though his attorney and investigators agreed that without his testimony it would be impossible to convict him.

Thompson said that while the murder of the Stricklands was reprehensible, he has nothing but praise for the way a changed Claypool has taken responsibility for his actions.

"This is the way it ought to be more often," said Thompson. "I think what people are seeing is his courage, and they respect his integrity for doing something for completely spiritual reasons. From our church, what I'm hearing is respect and honor for John, thanksgiving for God, and empathy and a desire to love his children and family in some tangible ways to let them know we support them."

Freer than ever

Claypool entered a guilty plea to two counts of second-degree homicide November 30. He waived his right to be tried as a juvenile for the crimes, and the state agreed not to seek first degree murder charges. Claypool will be sentenced January 4.

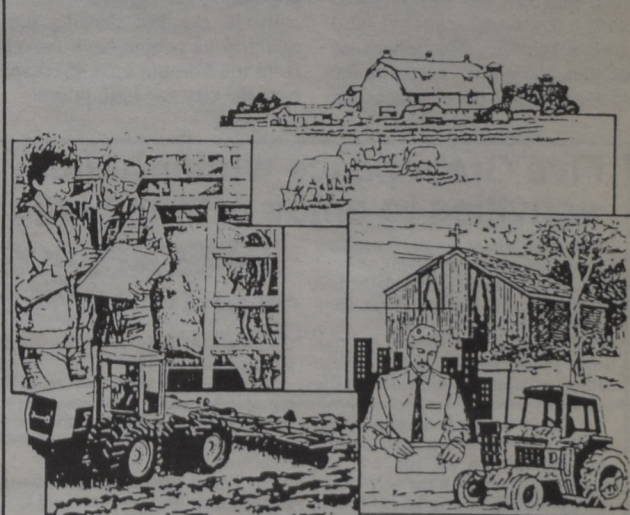
County Attorney Jim Nordstrom has recommended that Claypool serve concurrent sentences of just under 10 years, and be eligible for parole in about six-and-a-half years.

During his court appearance, Claypool's attorney read a statement in which Claypool apologized to the Strickland family, his own family, and the people of Lake City, a town of about 4,400 about 70 miles southeast of the Twin Cities. "I know that because of me, children did not have parents, grandchildren did not know their grandparents... neither my actions today, nor anything I

can do in the future will atone for all the wrong done."

Thompson concluded, "He's now the freest he's been in his whole life. He has the spiritual freedom of knowing that the worst secret about him has become known and can begin to be healed. His hope is that it will be healed for those he victimized as well. He's a free man, even though he's in prison."

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Agriculture

Ontario Christian farmers oppose Niagara land severance

GUELPH, Ont. (CFFO) — The Niagara Region has accepted a proposal from its agricultural land use subcommittee to allow as many as three housing severances per farm in the Niagara Peninsula within a three-year period.

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario strongly opposes the move because it will obliterate too much good farm land. Says federation president John Markus, "The CFFO has a longstanding policy of supporting very limited severance on prime agricultural land."

The Niagara Region's subcommittee was set up shortly after the Harris government cancelled a \$20-million program aimed at saving tender fruit lands. Markus says the Region's proposal "is slated for some of the best land in the province, much of it with a unique micro climate. We find it hard to justify on such a big section of specialty crop lands."

Small parcels of crop land not viable

Elbert van Donkersgoed, CFFO's research and policy director, further explains: "A major Ontario municipal board decision in the 1970s granted large urban boundaries to the cities and towns in the Niagara Region. [But] this was balanced with a restrictive scattered rural severance policy. Partly because of that, there's no need for the scattered rural development we

see in this proposal."

According to van Donkersgoed, agriculture's long-term viability depends on larger land parcels, not small parcels with pieces chopped out. Van Donkersgoed points out that specialty crop lands in the Niagara Region are an important part of the agricultural resources of the whole province and shouldn't be cut up for the sake of providing cash-strapped farmers with income relief.

"All of Ontario agriculture has gone through hard times since the early 1980s. Niagara farmers are not unique in this regard," says van Donkersgoed.

Ex-urbanites don't like real farms

Markus asserts that each severance creates an "urban shadow" around it that will make it more difficult to farm the remaining lands without conflict from neighbors. In addition, he points out that the resources simply don't exist for scattered rural development.

"Production agriculture has become an intensive rural activity," Markus says. "Many ex-urbanites who move out to the country find it incompatible with their search for a rural pastoral setting."

The Niagara Region's population has grown dramatically in the last decade, particularly as people have moved from the Toronto area to escape both the city and high prices.

Barns are being built for the new millennium

As of August 1, 1995, there were six dairy farms in the United States which have more than 10,000 dairy cows each. Eleven farms have anywhere from 5,000 to 8,800 cows. And three farms have from 4,300 to 4,600 cows.

Joseph Gallo Farms in Atwater, Calif., is the largest U.S. dairy operation and owns 14,500 cows. Braum's Dairy Farm, owned by Bill and Mary Braum of Tuttle, Oklahoma, has the largest single milking facility, big enough for 12,800 cows. The milking parlor milks 200 cows at once.

In Canada, because of the Canadian quota system, cow numbers are much smaller. Only a few dairy producers milk 300 head. Most are in the 40- to 60-cow range.

In 1970, the year I started dairy farming full time, Ontario had 29,000 dairy farmers. Today, 7,940 farmers produce the same amount of milk as in 1970. About 260 Ontario dairy farmers called it quits this year. Because Canada is slowly opening its agricultural markets to the U.S., the fear among dairy farmers is that their quota, which is worth around \$11,000 per cow, will be worthless in the next century.

'Cattle castles'

But things are rapidly changing in Canada. Those farmers who want to be milking, and do it efficiently, are expanding their dairy operations, ready to meet the Americans head on. Huge "cattle castles" have been constructed like we have never seen before. Barns 108 feet wide by 300 to 400 feet long, that can house 500 or more cows, are going up. Milking parlors 80 by 130 feet, where double, 18-parallel milking systems milk cows three times a day are mindboggling to most present day dairy farmers and their families. Bulk milk tanks which hold 2,000 to 3,000 gallons are also a sight to behold.



I've visited a few of these "cattle castles" when a construction company held an open house. One grandiose barn, which went up in my neighborhood, drew 1,500 people from far and near.

The one thing that has amazed me about these spacious barns is the large feed alley for feeding the cows — I think it wastes space. A large tractor with a feed wagon comes in one door, augers a mixed ration in front of the cows, goes out the other end and turns around, and then comes in and feeds the other side. A few hundred animals can be fed in minutes.

The big barns that have gone up this decade have been going away from mechanized feeding and manure removal. Cement tower silos are a thing of the past. There are too many mechanical breakdowns. Feed is stored in huge bunk silos. Manure drops through the slatted floors and runs down, away from the barn, to a cement holding tank that is 12 feet deep and 120 or so feet in diameter. It's very environmentally friendly.

First-class hotels

The new barns going up have one thing in mind for the animals: cow comfort. And they cost money — anywhere up to \$10,000 per cow. Cows eat and when they're full they lie down in comfort on rubber (or other material) mattresses that are padded with felt. They can rest and sleep in spacious stalls wherever they wish to lodge for the night and are only disturbed for the milking. And wow, what a way to be milked!

One new barn I visited had goldfish in the cement water troughs. The goldfish will eat the algae, thus keeping the water clean.

It's not only the cows which live in first-class hotels. You should see some of the modern calf barns, uh, calf hotels. It's heaven on earth for them as well.

Maynard Vander Galien is a dairy farmer in the Ottawa Valley (Renfrew, Ont.). He has been milking cows since he was a boy and likes to see animals housed comfortably.

Five Greenpeace winter holiday activities to enjoy with the kids

(NC)—The winter holidays are often eagerly anticipated by young and old alike. But without school, kids, and parents, may need activity ideas. Here are five ideas which will not only occupy the children in your life, but help you and them to appreciate the natural environment on which all life depends.

1. Go for a walk in the park. Often in the winter we don't go outside enough. Bundle up and use the opportunity to look at the way nature changes during the winter.

2. Use an old milk carton to make a bird feeder. Watch the birds that come to feed (remember to keep the feeder stocked. Once the birds know that they can eat at your house, they'll keep coming back).

3. If your winter holidays involve having a Christmas tree, plant a seedling in a pot in your home and in the spring you can "replace" the tree

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GREEN NEWS

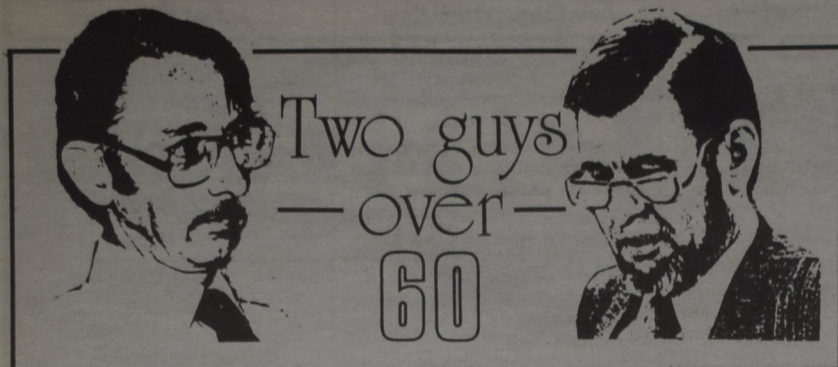
that was cut down at Christmas by planting the seedling.

4. Decorate sheets of recycled newspaper for wrapping paper. Experiment using potatoes which have been carved and stamped with food coloring.

5. Paper maché small balloons (using strips of newspaper and flour and water mixture). When the mixture has dried, decorate the balls, attach a string and hang around the house.

For a free copy of Greenpeace's factsheet, "The Power of One," which has more tips on what individuals can do to protect the environment, please write to: Greenpeace, 185 Spadina Avenue, Suite 604, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2C6.

Opinion



Bert Witvoet

Adrian Peetoom

Dear Bert,

Why are men increasingly unhappy with the church? You asked me about that can of worms last month. Not all of them are unhappy, of course. Maybe not even the majority that still go to church. But I've met enough unhappy ones to raise the point.

Many men my age tell me that they don't like changes in the church. One such man I know is a creative businessperson, always ready for new ideas. *But no changes in church, please: give me a comfortable pew, one strong man in charge on the pulpit, no shaking hands, raising hands, clapping hands. No guitar, drums, piano, just a pipe organ.* "Remember the time we built the church, the Christian school? We were family, then, united." I heard another say, "What we need is a new building project. That would bring unity and enthusiasm back."

Younger men are also unhappy. Some I know don't care for church much anymore, but hang on to please their parents. I've seen them: bodies in the pew, minds miles away. Others have developed forms of spirituality that need congregational warmth, lively worship, participation, full equality for their wives, respect for their children, and the road to get there seems long — too long. Some leave for other congregations, some drop out.

However, I smell another force at work underneath all that. I have a feeling that we're in the throes of a fundamental shift in thinking about God, a return from seeing an exclusively transcendent and controlling God. The God of my own youth was a Ruler, King, Lord, Rock. Powerful but distant. That ruler image of God functioned to make the church formal, rule-

bound, and very, very male! For as God rules, so must those appointed by God (who is male after all). If you were a ruling man, there was a ready ruling place for you in the church. And the church is a place of rules. "Right" and "wrong" and nothing in between.

What many have discovered recently, theologians and pew-folk both, is that this ruler image of God is one-sided. Rediscovered images of God stress God's patient, compassionate, experimental, even suffering presence with humanity.

*"I've seen them:
bodies in the pew,
minds miles away."*

Women have begun to share new shapes of faith and new language of faith (*Mother Sophia (wisdom), womb, hen*).

I've discovered that my mother's faith was always different from my father's, but only now can she reveal that. And for my wife it's never been "right" and "wrong," but "other" and "different." New images are shaping new church life. Fewer rules, more "let's try this," fewer doctrines and forms, more litanies and special services, fewer "elders," more "committees" and "ministries."

The shift is profound, and it has a profound effect on the church. I read the pain of this shift in what Nick Loenen wrote (CC, Oct. 27) about the nature of worship. I read the pain of this shift in the news about an impending further schism in the CRC ("Conservative CRC conference threatens secession," CC, Nov. 24). And I read the pain of this shift in the eyes of bewildered men whose forms of faith are challenged. Yet I believe the shift must and will take place, for I believe it to be

a rediscovery of long overlooked elements in Scripture. "Women in office" is not about power for women, but about images of God.

I see no end of pain in sight. My prayer is that we see our enemies within ourselves, not in other people. God does not change, even if our images of God shift over time. The Bible is full of images of God, and every genuine Christian poet adds his or her own. When we rely on many images, we are preventing few from becoming idols. I'm afraid that the church of my youth had a few idols, and getting rid of them is no easy task.

*Shalom,
Adrian*

Dear Adrian:

This business of men being unhappy with the church and staying away has been evident in mainline churches for decades. We did a news story on that in the May 27, 1994, issue of our paper: "Where are men on Sunday morning?"

According to Don Luidens, a Reformed sociologist whom our then reporter, Irene Bom, quoted, men at work were secularized more quickly than women at home. They worked in an environment of competition, image, power, opinions, action, success. Women, on the other hand, continued to live in a smaller world of intimacy, touching, personal relations and reflection. So church was more relevant to them.

That is changing today because many women are now also in the workforce. One woman I talked to recently told how in her work place everybody is competing and

back-stabbing. She didn't trust anyone. Does this mean that women, too, are going to be less spiritual?

But let's get back to men being unhappy today. I notice that you focus on how we are changing our image of God. I wonder which comes first, the chicken of how we are changing as men or the egg of how we are changing our picture of God?

*"They think of a 19th
century Western
father who knows
how to rule but not
how to relate."*

One reason why some are changing the language of faith from Father to Mother may be because we think of a 19th century Western father who knows how to rule but not how to relate. Maybe if we men change and become more like the biblical man or the man that Jesus was, we don't need to resort to feminist language like Mother and Sophia. Then "Father God" may be quite adequate as a God image, even though we all know (or should know) that God has no gender.

Why do men have to change?

A local friend of mine explains it this way: We men have been stuck with the role of judges, deciders and doers. As a result we do not give ourselves permission to be nurturers, supporters and encouragers. Instead of affirming each other we focus on being right or wrong. This way we hollow out the inside.

We men have a hard time receiving, too, says my friend who's a deacon. And if you never receive, you dry up. Being willing to receive help from others is directly related to one's ability to receive God's grace, he thinks.

And then there's, of course, the tendency of men to avoid all emotional expressions that make them look vulnerable.

Have you seen that TV ad in which a daughter leaves home and her mother hugs her and she promises to call, but her father gives her a gift without saying anything? A little later the wrapped-up gift rings and the woman who's driving away from home tears open the parcel and finds a cell phone. Her father is calling her. But even then he can't say that he loves her but mutters something about having a Merry Christmas. Her answer: "I love you, too, Dad." Her lips tremble.

I can't stand that ad. It's so bloody stereotypical and sentimental. But I have to admit, the ad is full of ironic realities: the symbol of communications — a cellular phone — and a father who is incapable of communicating. But wouldn't you know it, by buying her this gift he allows his daughter's womanly intuition to bring out the unmentionable fact that he loves her. So, everyone should buy a cell phone for someone else this Christmas. That way we can all love each other long distance!

Is this a parable about men loving the church long distance?

*Gezegend Kerstfeest,
Bert*



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Classified Rates	Christmas Greetings	Anniversaries	Job Opportunities	For Rent
(Revised February 1, 1995) Births \$25.00 Marriages & Engagements \$40.00 Anniversaries \$45.00 2-column anniversaries . . \$90.00 Obituaries \$45.00 Notes of thanks \$35.00 Birthdays \$40.00 All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00. Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge. Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive ATTENTION! a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion. c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original. d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements. e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.). NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address. Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313	PASMA: To all my friends and relatives: A blessed Christmas and the Lord's blessing in the New Year. Alice Pasma, R.R. #1, Springfield, ON N0L 2J0  Obituaries Listowel, Ont. Goderich, Ont. June 2, 1961 - Dec. 3, 1995 "He will cover you with his feathers and under his wings you will find refuge, his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart" Psalm 91:4. DAVID WILLIAM DE BOER passed away on Sunday, Dec. 3, 1995, after a long battle with cancer. He leaves to mourn in his passing his dear wife Christina (Holtrop) de Boer and his children Janice and Paul. His loving parents Bill and Hennie de Boer, R.R.#1, Lucknow, Ont. Three brothers and one sister: Ken & Jocelyn de Boer — Lucknow, Ont. Murray & Deborah de Boer — Samia, Ont. John & Ronda Bennett (fiancee) de Boer — Lucknow, Ont. Rosemary & David Hood — Guelph, Ont. Seven nieces and nephews. His mother-in-law Mrs. John Holtrop, Keswick, Ont. Grandma Aaltje van Donkersgoed, Gorie, Ont. The funeral service was held on Dec. 6, 1995, at Trinity Chr. Ref. Church, Goderich, Ont. Rev. Jack Quartel officiated. Home address: R.R.5, Goderich, ON N7A 3Y2 After a painful battle with cancer, the Lord took unto himself our dear sister-in-law and friend JENNY WITT (nee VAN EEK) May the Lord comfort her husband Harold, and her children: David & Edel van Duyvenvoorde Joyce van Duyvenvoorde Duanne van Duyvenvoorde Michael van Duyvenvoorde Murray van Duyvenvoorde and her loving grandsons Justin and Mark. We, the extended family, will miss her very much. We thank God for what she has meant to all of us. the Van Duyvenvoorde family in Ontario the Vander Zwaag family in Ontario the Molenaar family in B.C. the Veenstra family in Ontario Correspondence address: Nel Molenaar, 9093 Wright Street, Langley, BC V1M 3T3	1955 December 16 1995 With thankfulness and praise to God we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents THE REV. HANS and MRS. TRUDY UITTENBOSCH Many thanks for your love, prayers, guidance and example, as you have trained us up in the way we should go. May our merciful and steadfast God continue to turn his face towards you and bless you abundantly! Marcel & Gwen Uittenbosch — Calgary, Alta. Chelsey, Carissa, Courtney Selwyn & Helen Uittenbosch — Mississauga, Ont. Derrick, Trevor, Kristin Desiree & Kevin Francisco — Calgary, Alta. Home address: 147 Fairview, Dollard des Ormeaux, QC H9A 1V5 Personal Retired widower , in good health, likes to meet Christian lady (SW or central Ontario). Age 57-64. Reply with note and phone number to File #2638, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 ONE TO ANOTHER Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue \$5. Write to: #302, 1502-2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2 Dutch Canadian lady , early fifties, southern Ontario, enjoys theatre, concerts, spending quality time at home, would like to meet Christian gentleman with similar interests. Please write to: File #2637, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.	Director of Congregational Life and Youth The Chr. Ref. Church, Aylmer, Ont., is seeking applicants for a full-time associate pastor (ordained or lay person). Job description and brief profile of our congregation available upon request. Send letters of inquiry to Ed Weesjes, R.R. #3, St. Thomas, ON N5P 3S7. Phone (519) 631-6004. Miscellaneous	BERGENTHEIM TE HUUR VOOR VAKANTIE: Moderne gemeubileerde woning (modern furnished home) — per week of per maand — in Bergentheim, Overijssel (ongeveer 12 km van Ommen). Voor volledige informatie bel of schrijf naar: J. Snijders 651-4 Ave. E. Brooks, AB T1R 0H4 Phone: (403) 362-4052 or (403) 362-2653 Miscellaneous
			Leadership In Focus offers "Mapping Your Vision" FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS strategic and operational planning, change management through group and community facilitations. Martin Van Dyk, facilitator/presenter (613) 969-5261	

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This offer applies only to those who were never subscribers of *Christian Courier* or whose subscription lapsed more than a year ago.
 (Valid until December 31, 1995).

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Classis meeting:

— **Classis Eastern Canada** will meet in regular session on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 5-6, 1996, in Bethel Chr. Ref. Church, Brockville, Ont. Materials for the agenda must reach the Stated Clerk by Jan. 12, 1996.

James Kooistra, Stated Clerk.


For Rent

Apartment for rent. Private; over separate garage in park-like setting. **Jordan, Ont.**, area. Kitchen with appliances, living room, one bedroom, 3-piece bath. Available Dec. 1, 1995. Phone (905) 562-7464 or (905) 562-5232.

House for rent in Niagara Falls, Ont. Two bedrooms, 1 1/2 storey. \$650 per month, first and last. Does not include utilities. For more information please call
 (905) 358-9150 or
 (905) 358-7200

For rent in Smithville: Basement apartment; good for two adults \$550 a month, fridge, stove and utilities included. No smoking, no pets. For more information, call (905) 957-2596.

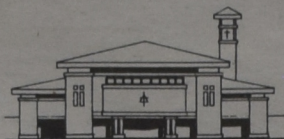
Classifieds

Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous
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PRINCIPAL

Lacombe Chr. School, Lacombe, Alta., is accepting applications for the position of **Principal** for the **1996/97** school year.

Lacombe Chr. School is a school of 340 students serving grades K-9. The school is located in the town of Lacombe, located midway between Edmonton and Calgary. The Lacombe Chr. School is looking for an educational leader who is a committed Christian and who has the experience, vision and skills necessary to lead our staff and school.

Please send resume, statement of education philosophy and other pertinent information prior to **January 31, 1996**, to:

Mr. John Piers, Principal
Lacombe Chr. School, 5206-58 Street, Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9
Phone: (403) 782-6531; Fax: (403) 782-5760



NEXT WEEK NO ISSUE!!

Life Enrichment Co-ordinator

Mount Nemo Lodge requires a **full-time Life Enrichment Co-ordinator**. Applicants must have a degree in gerontology or a diploma in the Two-Year Activation Co-ordinator/Gerontology Program. Excellent organizational and time management skills needed. Specialized social skills with the elderly considered an asset. Resumes to be sent by **January 19, 1996**, to **Mount Nemo Lodge, R.R. #2, Milton, ON L9T 2X6**, attention of the Administrator.

Miscellaneous

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RRSP

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SURVEY FOR "SALEM PLACE"

Salem Place is in the process of determining interest and need for developing affordable housing on land adjacent to Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont.

Please assist us by filling in the following mini-survey:

- I am interested in re-locating to Brampton, in close proximity to Holland Christian Homes.
() Yes () No
- I am interested in buying. () Yes () No
I am interested in renting. () Yes () No
- Please indicate your preference:
Type: () Apartment () Townhome
Size: () One Bedroom; () One Bedroom plus Den;
() Two Bedroom; () Three Bedroom
- If Townhome, I would prefer: () 2-storey; () Bungalow
- If I were buying an Apartment or Townhome, I would expect to pay:
() \$125,000 - \$135,000
() \$135,000 - \$145,000
() Over \$145,000
- If I were to rent a new Townhome or Apartment, I would expect the monthly rent to be: () \$700 - \$800; () \$800 - \$900; () \$900 - \$1,000; () Over \$1,000

My name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Code: _____

Phone number: _____



**Salem
Christian
Mental Health
Association**

Please send response to:

SALEM, Suite 512, 1 Yonge St., Hamilton, ON L8N 1T8
For more information please call (905) 528-0353

Classifieds

Events	Events	Events	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous
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Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Dec. 22: Christmas concert with the Christian choir "New Life" and the "Garden City Christian Male Chorus," 7:30 p.m., Maranatha CRC, St. Catharines, Ont.

Dec. 22 Annual candlelight service with the "Adoramus-Maranatha Choir" (John Hunse, director), 8 p.m., Mount Hamilton CRC, Hamilton, Ont.

Dec. 24 Forty-fifth anniversary special worship service, 10 a.m., Orangeville CRC, Orangeville, Ont. (#)

Dec. 27 The "Annual John Knox Chr. School Hockey Tournament," 7:30 a.m., Double Rink Arenas (Jane St., just south of Hwy. 7), Woodbridge, Ont. Info.: Gary Maas (905) 455-1886.

Dec. 28-29: "Alleluia - '95" concerts by "The Ambassadors" with Stephanie Numan, violin. Dec. 28: 8 p.m., Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont.; Dec. 29: First CRC, Hamilton, Ont. Info.: (905) 389-2104.

Jan. 28 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Riemer Praamsma, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

Miscellaneous

FROM COAST TO COAST

ENGLISH RADIO:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

DUNCAN-CKAY..... 10am 1500
Burns Lake-CFLD..... 9:15am 1400
Kitimat-CKTK..... 8:30am 1230
Osoyoos-CJOR..... 8:00 am 1490
Penticton-CKOR..... 8:00 am 800
Port Alberni-CJAV..... 7:00 pm 1240
Prince George-CIRX... 7:00am 94.3
Princeton-CHOR..... 8:00 am 1400
Smithers-CFBV..... 9:15am 1230
Summerland-CHOR..... 8:00 am 1450
Vancouver-CJVB..... 7:00 am 1470
Vancouver-1fm)..... 7:00 am 103.3
Vernon-CJIB..... 9:30pm 940

ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBQ..... 8:00am 1340
Edson-CJYR..... 10:00am 970
Ft. McMurray-CJOK... 8:30 am 1230
High River-CHRB..... 6:30am 1280
St. Albert-CHMG..... 8:00 am 104.9

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL..... 8:00am 1280
Weyburn-CFSL..... 8:00am 1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM..... 9:30am 950
Steinbach-CHSM..... 9:30am 1250
Winnipeg-CKJS..... 9:15am 810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK..... 9:30am 1240

Burlington-CING (fm) ... 7:30am 107.9
Chatham-CFCO..... 6:00 am 630
Fort Frances-CFOB... 9:30 am 640
Guelph-CJOY..... 10:00pm 460
Hamilton-CHAM..... 7:30am 820
Kapuskasing-CKAP... 9:00am 580
Kingston-WLKC..... 7:30 a.m 100.7
Newmarket-CKDX..... 9:00 am 1480
Oshawa-CKAR..... 8:00am 1350
Owen Sound-CFOS..... 10:30am 560
Pembroke-CHVR..... 10:00am 1350
St. Catharines-CKTB... 7:30pm 610
Sarnia-CHOK..... 7:30am 1070
Stratford-CJCS..... 8:45am 1240
Windsor-CKLW..... 8:30am 580
Wingham-CKNX..... 10:30am 920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm) ... 8:00am 102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Newcastle-CFAN..... 9:00am 790
Saint John-CHSJ..... 9:30am 700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY... 7:00am 630

QUEBEC

Montreal-CFOR (fm) ... 7:30am 92.5

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY..... 6:00am 1420
Kentville-CKEN..... 8:30am 1490
Middleton-CKAD..... 8:30am 1350
New Glasgow-CKEC... 7:30am 1320
Sydney-CJCB..... 8:00am 1270
Weymouth-CKDY..... 8:30am 103.1
Windsor-CFAB..... 8:30am 1450

FRENCH RADIO:

Perspectives Réformées

ONTARIO

Cornwall-CFXX..... 9:30am 1170
Timmins-CRCL..... 9:30am 620

QUEBEC

Montreal-CHRS..... 8:00am 1090
Valleyfield-CFLV..... 8:45am 1370

TELEVISION:

Faith 20-TV

(Monday to Friday)

Ontario..... 5:30am
on the Global TV Network
Check your local listings for cable outlets airing Faith 20.

Vision-TV

(every Saturday)

British Columbia..... 7:00 & 10:00pm
Alberta..... 8:00 & 11:00pm
Sask. & Manitoba..... 6:00 & 9:00pm
Ontario & Quebec..... 7:00 & 10:00pm
Nfld., N.B., N.S. & P.E.I. 8:00 & 11:00pm



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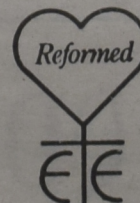


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World



Letter from Croatia

A Mennonite relief worker reflects on the 'twisted irony' that is Bosnia

ZAGREB, Croatia — November 7 to 9 I had the opportunity of accompanying staff of Duhovna Stvarnost, one of Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) local partner organizations here, to deliver relief aid — including MCC health and refugee kits — into Bosnia.

As on my first two trips into Bihac, Bosnia, I was at once both exhilarated and heartbroken. Breathtaking vast mountains covered with colorful autumn trees, white snow already sugarcoating the countryside and the clear blue water of rivers and lakes captured my eyes and heart.

At the same time I saw expanses of destroyed, charred houses. All God has created to be beautiful and natural and good is in sharp, dramatic contrast with the sights, sounds and aftermath of all we as humans have utterly destroyed. This is Bosnia — a paradox, a sad, twisted irony; a glaring example of how we have failed to live out God's commandments on this earth. On our way to Kakanj in a three-vehicle convoy (a trip that would normally take four hours has become during wartime a harrowing 14 hours), our first hurdle was finding another Duhovna truck, full of relief aid, overturned on the roadside. Several hours earlier it had skidded on a patch of ice. Fortunately, neither the driver, the truck itself, nor any of the aid was hurt.

'Lessons in flexibility'

We drove to the nearest United Nations' station and asked for assistance. Within a few hours, we were all back on the road, finally arriving at the Herzegovina border at Livno. We were unable to pass because all humanitarian aid vehicles had to cross at another point.

It took us at least an hour and a half to learn this, however, and another hour and a half to reach the next border crossing. This was only one of many lessons in flexibility along the trip. As the journey progressed, my respect for Ivan Vacek, who directs Duhovna Stvarnost's relief efforts, and for others who regularly deliver aid to war-torn areas grew and grew.

Among the others are German Mennonites who have driven countless truckloads of materials to the region. MCC is helping them purchase a new used tractor-trailer to replace the truck on which they've racked up 200,000 miles over mountainous terrain.

These "first-line" relief workers must possess tremendous patience, faith, courage and a willingness to take risks. Once officially across the Bosnian border, night had fallen and we travelled in blizzard-like conditions the road the United Nations had carved through the mountains. One of our trucks became stuck and could not proceed further up the mountain. The four of us in the smaller vehicle went ahead to find somewhere to sleep, and then our driver turned back in hopes of finding the other truck, now lost in the storm.

We found a nearby abandoned hotel in the city of Bugonjo, with bullet holes in all the doors and walls and no hot water or heating. I was glad I had borrowed a friend's sleeping bag. Throughout the night the sound of grenades woke me several times. As my body stiffened, I realized what it must feel like to live with such fear each and every day.

The next day, after a long day's drive through central Bosnia, we at last made it to Kakanj. We went straight to work unloading into a warehouse our truckful of children's shoes, some food items and MCC health and refugee kits.

Later the International Mennonite Organization unit in Kakanj, made up principally of young Germans and Americans, as well as some local people, will distribute the goods according to the needs of the families in this mainly Muslim, industrial town.

Easy to lose hope

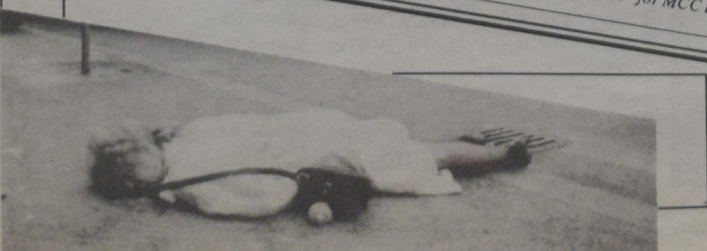
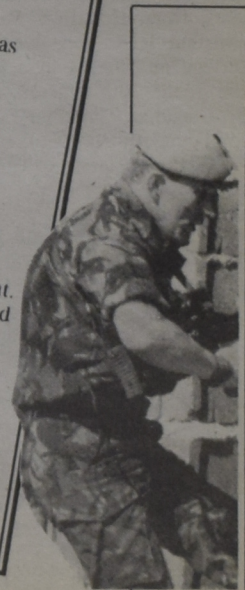
By the time we slowly made our way back to Croatia I had seen so many destroyed, incinerated houses that they all began to look alike. It occurred to me how easy it is to become complacent, numb, paralyzed — to lose hope that there is any way to rise above this horrible situation.

I'm glad for the North Americans who continue to respond to the needs despite what they see on the TV news every night. Bosnians and all former Yugoslavs need to know they haven't been abandoned, that they are noticed in all their suffering and pain and that there are people who are at the least praying for them.

My prayer is to never become complacent, for in so doing there is a risk of considering acceptable what has happened here. My prayer instead is: "Forgive us, Lord, for we know not what we do, but we call upon your holy name to restore us and make us whole again."

Amy Gopp, of Lima, Ohio, has completed several "missions" for MCC in Bosnia and Croatia. She is a member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kent, Ohio.

Amy Gopp



The Serbian president.

News

British Columbia's Lower Mainland continues to be a hotbed of Christian education



A children's choir singing at the grand opening of the new Christian school in Langley

James Kwantes

LANGLEY, B.C. — On Nov. 23, over 1,000 people attended the grand opening of a new Christian middle school for Langley which will eventually house grades 6-12.

Before the ceremony, hundreds of students, parents and grandparents toured the new facility.

Using the Psalm 31:15 passage "Our times are in your hands" as a theme, the program also celebrated the 40th anniversary of Christian education in Langley. The Langley Christian school opened its doors in 1955 and has since grown to include 515 students on two campuses.

Three-year pledge

The money to fund the entire building project — which has cost about \$3.8 million so far and will eventually cost an estimated \$5 million — is being raised through a capital campaign that involves three-year pledges.

Elementary school principal

Leo Smit and middle school principal Peter Van Huizen say interdenominational growth is an important part of the success of the Langley Christian school system. Almost half the students now enrolled come from non-CRC churches.

Much non-CRC participation

"What I find exciting is that virtually every non-CRC family was at the grand opening," says Van Huizen.

Earlier this year, Van Huizen moved to Langley from Ontario, where he was the principal at Beacon Chr. High and Calvin Memorial Chr. School in St. Catharines, Ont. Before that, he was the first principal of Quinte Christian Secondary in Belleville, Ont.

The new campus currently houses 185 students in grades 6-9. When all phases of the 55,000 square foot school are completed it will double in size to about 100,000 square feet and have room to accommodate 650 students. The new school includes eight classrooms, a double gym, language arts lab, music room and computer, biology and science labs. Future phases will include an industrial education workshop, home economics wing and student lounge.

Co-ordinated long-range plan

The new Langley Christian Middle School is part of a co-ordinated, long-range plan involving three schools in B.C.'s Lower Mainland. Fraser Valley Christian High in Surrey completed a 26,000 square foot addition and renovations last year. Construction on a new Christian middle school in Surrey, housing grades 5-8, is slated to start in March. That school will have a capacity of about 300 students.

The Christian school growth in the Langley and Surrey areas mirrors the mushrooming population in the cities, which are two of B.C.'s fastest-growing communities. In the Lower Mainland, over 5,000 students currently attend Christian schools belonging to the Society of Christian Schools in B.C. The number of students attending SCSBC schools in the entire province is 8,500.

Fred and Christian education get carried away

Jack Zondag

ANCASTER, Ont. — Students from nine Hamilton area and Niagara Peninsula Christian elementary schools joined students from Hamilton District Christian High and Redeemer College on Nov. 3 in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Canadian Christian Education Foundation (CCEF).

CCEF was started in 1975 by a group of business people to fund the development of Christian curriculum materials. From the onset, Fred VanderVelde of Burlington, Ont., was the CCEF executive director.

Over the years, CCEF and its directors have raised and contributed more than \$2 million for Canadian Christian curriculum development. Foundation president Joe Feddema gave a gift of tribute to Fred and his wife, Audrey, VanderVelde in recognition of their years of service.

Keynote speaker Dr. James Payton spoke about the importance of being "carried away"

by Christian education in a secular age. Christian education is not a confining type of education, he said, but a liberating force.

Two additional rallies were held in late November in Lethbridge, Alta., and Smithers, B.C.



And flowers for the Missus! From l. to r.: Fred and Audrey VanderVelde, unidentified woman and Joe Feddema.

News Digest

North Korea floods bring aid

Dan Wooding

PYONGYANG, N. Korea — Following devastating floods in North Korea which have left crops destroyed and half-a-million people homeless, the communist government has agreed to allow the first non-government organization (NGO) there in 50 years to form.

Called the International Civilian Peace Co-operative and Promotional Association, this NGO is working with NGOs based in North America, Asia and Europe to provide humanitarian and financial aid.

MAP Asia, an arm of MAP International based in Brunswick, Georgia, has been at the forefront of forming the peace co-operative, having signed a Nov. 8 agreement with North Korea.

The North Korean NGO is the first civilian-operated, humanitarian non-profit organization of its kind which has been allowed since the inception of the country's communist government.

Ontario ministry gets work in Texas

TORONTO (OMNR) — The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has been awarded a two-year contract, beginning Jan. 2, 1996, to drop 2.5 million animal baits over 100,000 square kilometres of the State of Texas in order to help fight against coyote and fox rabies there. Texas will pay all OMNR expenses, including salaries.

During an experimental two-week drop of 800,000 baits last February, OMNR air service staff flew two aircraft over a 31,000 km area of the state and trained their Texas counterparts in the use of the Ontario-designed bait dropping equipment.

Ontario has also provided equipment for smaller-scale drops in New York State and in areas of Quebec which border Ontario.

Ontario is well on the way to eliminating its own fox rabies problem due to its control program which started in 1989. The disease in the province is expected to be eliminated by 2001.